

**HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION AND EXECUTIVE  
AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Agriculture Safety and Health Awareness Days (SHADs)  
Review of delivery to date, including the 2007-08 programme  
and proposals for 2008-09**

**Summary**

1 This paper provides an update on the delivery of farming, forestry and arboriculture SHADs during 2007-08. It also reviews the position on SHADs as an intervention method since their introduction and outlines proposals for 2008-09.

**Background**

2 'Agriculture SHADs' were first developed by HSE's Agriculture Sector as an intervention method during 1999/2000. The first pilot events (for farmers) were run in 2000. Subsequently, the concept has been developed and extended to forestry and arboriculture as well as farming. All three projects were combined into a single 'Agricultural SHAD' project in 2007/08, to simplify planning for the third year of HSE's 'Fit 3' Strategic Programme.

3 Members have previously discussed the aims, format, organization and delivery of the three types of SHADs - in October 2006 (AIAC paper 060603 rev.1) and again in October 2007 (AIAC paper 071004 rev.1 which outlined the programme of SHADs proposed for 2007-08). Members have since received periodic updates and been informed of the link to the current list of agriculture SHADs posted on HSE's website. The final list for 2007-08 is attached at Annex 1.

**Farming SHADS**

4 By the end of March 2008, 17 farming SHADs will have been delivered in 2007/08. 18 were planned, i.e. 3 in each of HSE's operational (FOD) divisions. Excluding London. Unfortunately, following discussion with the NFU Wales, Wales & South West Division was unable to deliver the remaining event proposed for late in the year, due to the pressure of farming activities (lambing).

Another event was transferred from East and South East Division to Scotland, to accommodate local (FOD) preferences.

5 It is estimated that approximately 35,000 farmers have attended the 130+ farming SHADs that have been organised through the Sector since they were first developed. However, a number of other smaller events have also been run by some Divisions, targeting particular sectors of the industry such as glasshouse growers, pig producers and equine establishments (a joint venture with local authorities). These have been separately funded and delivered locally, and details of many of these events are not known.

6 In the past 3 years, farming SHADs organised and funded through the Sector have focussed on the most relevant 'Fit3' topics i.e. transport, working at height and musculo-skeletal disorders (manual handling). The scenarios demonstrated are selected to reflect the typical farming activities and equipment used in the area e.g. use of telehandlers, ATVs, livestock handling. However, there is still a strong demand (by farmers and local inspectors) to include 'non-Fit3' topics e.g. PTO and machinery guarding, dealing with blockages etc. Child safety messages have been integrated into relevant demonstrations and the health-related scenarios have been further developed during 2007/08 to demonstrate practical measures to protect against skin and respiratory sensitisers. The safe use and storage of pesticides is also covered where requested.

7 The target audience continues to be the self-employed and family farm sectors. However, many employers have asked to attend events over the years, and they are not normally 'turned away'. In response to the request from members for a SHAD to be extended to include employers and employees, the local NFU and Unite/TGWU Branch officials were contacted to publicise the 'pilot' event held at Berkshire on 20 February. It was advertised through their local and national e-newsletters as well as Unite/TGWU's 'Landworker' magazine, with a link to further information and the booking form on HSE's Agriculture webpage. These routes do not appear to have attracted significant additional enquiries or attendees.

8 It is no longer possible to retrieve information on SHADs or follow-up visits from HSE's work recording systems and a detailed summary of each event has not been provided by the local organisers. However, from the information available and given the average attendance and the total number of SHADs run to date, it is estimated that less than 10% of the original target audience of self-employed farmers has attended a SHAD since early 2000.

9 As part of the original 'Self-Employed and Family Farms' project, Divisions were required to carry out follow-up visits to non-responders/non-attendees. These visits were intended to provide information on the level of compliance and health and safety standards of non-responder farms and to encourage attendance at subsequent events. Health and Safety Awareness Officer (HSAO) time was initially set aside for this purpose, but this follow-up

activity has not been widely implemented by Divisions because of resourcing and other demands on staff.

10 Divisional staff will have compiled information on non-attendees/responders, but this information is not recorded on HSE's databases. Limited information is now recorded on the current system (COIN from 2005 onwards) but access to the previous system (FOCUS 1995/96 – 2004/05) is now restricted. As a result, detailed information for anything other than the most recent SHADs is no longer available.

## **Forestry SHADs**

11 Three forestry SHADs were originally planned for 2007-08, but additional funding was obtained to run an extra event in the New Forest on 19 March 2008. This brings the total number of forestry SHADs organised and delivered by the Sector between 2005 and 2008 to 10. They have been attended by approximately 750 people representing a wide range of those working in the industry; in particular Forestry Works Managers, Site Safety Co-ordinators and their regular contractors - from both the public and private sectors.

12 The capacity at Forestry SHADs is limited by format and location to 100 people per day who are split into 2 sessions, observing 3 interactive scenarios. They take place in the forest with Forestry Commission trainers playing the role of workers carrying out typical high-risk operations relevant to the area. The content and format of forestry SHADs have been developed in partnership with the Forestry Commission and other key industry bodies e.g. the United Kingdom Forestry Products Association, CONFOR (the Forestry Contractors Association) and a number of private companies.

13 Attendees are encouraged to adopt either the role of manager or another person working on site. The decision to move away from the 'watch and learn' methods traditionally used in SHADs to a loose form of interactive 'role play' has been very successful in delivering key messages and importantly, in encouraging the sharing of good practice/experiences between attendees. The events have also addressed a number of key forestry issues including transport and handling of trees and timber, protection of the public, emergency procedures, as well as machine/chainsaw safety and related health issues such as noise and vibration.

14 Forestry SHADs have been evaluated through feedback provided by attendees on the day and by independent research. Like farming SHADs, 95-99% of those who attended and completed evaluation sheets agree that the key aims of the SHADs have been met and would recommend similar events to others. This has been reflected by favourable coverage in the media, including a feature on BBC Scotland's Landward (Scotland's version of Countryfile), in local news, the media and trade press.

15 In a further development, arrangements have been made for the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) to film the SHAD on 19 March, with a view to incorporating the footage in a series of 'podcasts' which will provide advice on high risk issues in forestry. These 'podcasts' will be launched on HSE's new 'Tree Work' website (currently under development) and be fully evaluated to test the potential use and impact of this new communication medium. An interactive DVD of the SHAD will also be produced for training purposes and for those working in the forestry sector.

16 Based on the very positive response and demand from the industry, it is proposed that forestry SHADs should continue in a similar format for at least the coming year. The Sector has requested funding for a further 3 events, to target new areas of the country in 2008/09. Feedback and input from the industry during the year will be used to further develop these SHADs and assess their future viability.

### **Arboriculture SHADs**

17 Four 'Arboriculture Client SHADs' were held in 2007-08, bringing the total since their inception in 2003 to 17. Given the format, the number attending is limited to about 60/day. It is estimated approximately 800 people (representing some 300 organisations) have attended since 2003.

18 Arboriculture SHADs are mainly lecture-based with a single practical demonstration of the latest climbing practice, equipment and procedures. These are endorsed by a set of questions given to delegates, intended to help clients recognise and employ competent i.e. adequately trained, contractors. These events are therefore aimed at those commissioning, managing and supervising contractors and in-house arboricultural operations, particularly in the local authority (LA) sector as well as other large 'clients' e.g. the utility and construction companies, highways maintenance departments, charities, Government departments and other organisations undertaking treework.

### **Programme of Agriculture SHADs 2008/09**

19 It is proposed that the same number of farming, forestry and arboriculture SHADs planned for 2007/08 should be run in 2008/09. At the time of writing, planning and funding arrangements for 2008/09 have yet to be finalised. However, under new arrangements to be introduced in April, FOD Divisions will now bid for their own events and as a result, the Sector cannot exercise control over the programme or require Divisions to deliver a given number of SHADs.

20 Traditionally, the practical demonstrations and technical content at all three types of SHAD have been delivered by external contractors (instructors/training providers) arranged through the Agriculture & Food Sector and funded by a separate 'Agriculture Communications' budget under the Injury Reduction Programme.

21 Forestry and arboriculture SHADs are organised and delivered directly by the Sector, working with the professional trainers and industry bodies involved. These should not therefore be affected by the new planning arrangements, although local HSAOs are usually involved in identifying relevant local contacts and sending out invitations, as well as registration of delegates on the day. FOD inspectors also usually attend forestry SHADs to provide guidance and deal with legal/technical questions. It is hoped FOD staff will continue to support Sector staff at these events in 2008/09.

22 However, FOD staff are necessarily more directly involved in organising and delivering farming SHADs. These are therefore more resource intensive for Divisions and, despite the findings of independent research, managers in some areas have expressed concerns about the difficulty of organising SHADs, as well as their potential impact. It is therefore difficult to predict the final programme for 2008/09. Details of all events notified by FOD and arranged by the Sector will be made available to members as soon as possible.

### **Future of Agriculture SHADs**

23 The organisation, format and impact of farming, forestry and arboriculture SHADs is currently under review. Oxford Strategic Marketing has been engaged to review and advise HSE on its communications strategy for agriculture. Some members have been involved in this 'Insight' project.

### **Action/Recommendations**

24 AIAC members are invited to:

- (1) Note and consider the information about the delivery of the SHAD programme in 2007-08, and in previous years;
- (2) Note the Sector's plans to deliver as full a programme in 2008/09 as possible;
- (3) Suggest ways to identify, target and contact the potential audience for future events;
- (4) Suggest what further support they can provide for SHADs and ways to promote events locally and nationally; and
- (5) Suggest ways in which SHADs might be further developed and delivered e.g. through sponsorship.

### **Contact**

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